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"And, what will the Weaver say to this? who already finds his wages fallen, his reeds called in, and employment scarce. Should A WAR be the consequence of these time-serving Addresses, where is employment to be found? and how are the families of the poor to be maintained? If a decent subsistence cannot even now be obtained but with unwearied labour and painful exertion, what is to be done when employment ceases, when wages are sunk, and provisions rise? Look to it, ye pretended Loyal Addressers, ye hood-winked politicians! For, should your courtly effusions be the stalking-horse of intended hostilities, to you, and to you alone, the starving people will have a right to look for subsistence."—Address to the Inhabitants of Manchester, by a Member of the Manchester Constitutional Society. Dated 10th Dec. 1792.

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TO MANCHESTER ADDRESSERS.

Gentlemen,

There are some people in the world who will never listen to reason, except at times when they are in distress or trouble; who are made of that sort of stuff, that must be softened by adversity before it will descend to receive any new impression. Whether you answer to this description is more than I can say; but, I know very well, that your present state is by no means an enviable one; and, I shall, therefore, seize this opportunity of endeavouring to produce in your minds a just sense of your past conduct, and to point out to you what ought to be your conduct in future.

Look at my motto! Look at it steadily, if you can. Does not the sight of it bring the events of 1792 and 1793 into your minds? Does not the figure of your persecuted townsman, Mr. Thomas Walker, present itself before you? And do not your eyes fall to the ground at the sight? Oh! exclaim not against an endeavour to call these things to the public recollection. Truth and justice and the national interest require that it should be done.

It appears, that you are now in a state of confusion approaching towards a civil war; we hear of houses and manufactoryes destroyed; of moveable property seized and carried off; of the rich being laid under contributions for provisions, money, and arms; of large parties of armed people facing, and fighting against, soldiers of the standing army sent against them by the Government; of numerous killings and woundings: of all these we hear as having recently taken place at Manchester and in the country round about for many scores of miles, the disturbances having spread into several counties. Such is, probably, a very faint description of the present state of your

populous and valuable part of the kingdom. And, what are the alleged causes? A scarcity of employment and also of food. There are, indeed, those who attribute your troubles to what they called "the base and wicked arts of the disaffected;" but, this is too contemptible to merit much notice: for, besides that we have no proof of the existence of any disaffected persons in any part of the kingdom, we have the fullest proof, that those who are concerned in the troubles distinctly proclaim the grounds of their complaint to be a want of sufficient subsistence, arising from a want of sufficient wages. Hence they proceed to the breaking of frames, and to the destruction of those other machines, the use of which, by supplying the place of manual labour, are, by the labouring manufacturers, looked upon as a principal cause of their present sufferings.

Whence, then, are we to deduce that want of employment which has excited these troubles? For, they are not, in any great degree, owing to the shortness of the last crop of corn, seeing that the quartern loaf is now only 1s. 6d., and that it was 2s. for many months, in 1800 and 1801; so that, if the depreciation of money be taken into view, the bread is one-third cheaper now than it was then: and yet, we then heard of no such outrages amongst the manufacturers. It is chiefly owing to a want of employment in the manufacturing districts that we must attribute these troubles; and, whence, then, I ask, are we to deduce that want of employment?

The answer of the Whigs would be; "the Orders in Council;" while the Ministers and their partisans will assert, that we owe the evil to "the Berlin and Milan Decrees" and the inexorable interdictions of Buonaparté. I will not waste your time in any attempt to settle the

dispute between these parties; but will take it for granted, that none of you will deny, that the evil has arisen *out of the war*; and then I shall have two things to do, *first*, to examine into your conduct with regard to the producing of the war; taking, as I proceed, as much notice of the Church and King and Damn-Tom-Paine Riots as may be necessary upon the present occasion; and *second*, to point out to you what line of conduct I think you ought *now* to pursue, in order to remedy the evil which you experience, and to prevent its becoming of still greater magnitude.

In the year 1792 “What!” say you, “are you going to rip up old “grievances? What can 1792 have to do “with 1812?” A great deal to do with it. Nay, without going back to that year, we can know nothing of the origin of the war, and of the hand which you had in producing it; nor can we know any thing of the light, in which riots at Manchester were viewed when they had for their object the crushing of those who were against war, and in favour of reform. Therefore, we must go back to the year 1792, the time when you were addressed in the remarkable words of my motto, and when you treated those, who so addressed you, as Jacobins and traitors, though they could never be shown to have sought for any thing more than the preservation of that *peace*, for which you now so anxiously pray, and that *reform*, which has since been proved to be absolutely necessary to secure us even a chance of escaping from as great, if not greater, calamities than any other nation in Europe has had to endure.

In the year 1792, when the design of the English government to join in the war against France became manifest, many persons endeavoured to warn the people of the mischiefs that would, in all human probability, arise out of such a war. They remonstrated with the partisans of war in this way: “We have always said, our “best writers have always been teaching us, “that the French were miserable slaves; “they have been, for ages, our scorn and “reproach; we have held that they are a “race bowed down by the heavy hand of “tyranny, debased and degraded by it. “We have, for ages, been in the habit of “representing them as a people, each man “of whom held his life at the mercy of a “despotic government, and that govern-“ment we have represented as the most “profligate and corrupt in the whole

“world. We have been constantly railing “against the lazy drones of monks, who “used to eat up the fruits of the earth; “and against all the intolerance, religious “as well as political, with which the peo-“ple of France were cursed.—Well,” added the Reformers, “we now see the “people of France rising against this abo-“minable tyranny. We have seen them “put down the institutions of Monks; “we have seen them abolish those feudal “usages which were so degrading to the “mass of the people, and so intolerably “oppressive; we have seen them, in short, “assert their rights as men, resolved no “longer to be treated as beasts. And, “shall we for this become their enemy? “Shall we Englishmen arm against them, “and assist in driving them again into the “toils from which they have broken loose? “Shall we lend our aid in re-fastening “their chains? That such is the object “of the coalesced powers we cannot doubt, “after the proclamation of the Duke of “Brunswick. And, is it possible, that “Englishmen will willingly assist in such “an enterprise?” Such was the language of the English Reformers during the year 1792, and there was still good reason to hope, that war between England and France might have been prevented. In the month of August, in that year, the people of France dethroned their king, which gave rise to great clamours against them in England; and, afterwards, when he was put to death, that became the signal of war against France. The Reformers, however, were still for peace. They urged, that the French people accused their king of very serious crimes; that the accusation might be false, but that we had no means of ascertaining the fact, and that, at any rate, England could have no right to interfere in the internal affairs of France, any more than France had to interfere in matters connected with the succession to the throne of England. They said, that it was impolitic as well as unjust in England to take part in the war, then begun by Austria and Prussia against France. They said it would be hostile to the liberty, the prosperity, and even the independence of England. Such were the doctrines of the English Reformers in the year 1792, at which time there were numerous societies of reformers established in the kingdom, one of which societies was at Manchester, and belonging to that society was Mr. Thomas Walker, of whose treatment I shall speak more fully by-and-by.

The partisans of war were not, during this time, inactive; and, being countenanced by the government, their operations were carried on to great advantage. Unable to meet the Reformers in argument, they, at a very early period of the contest, threw aside discussion and resorted to accusation. Mr. Paine's pamphlets were first answered by Proclamations, and afterwards by Ex-Officio Informations, while the Reformers, though seeking for nothing more than both Pitt and Fox had declared to be necessary to the country's salvation, were, at first, denominated "Republicans and "Levellers," and next, "Jacobins and "Traitors." Now followed numerous prosecutions against the press, and soon after a suspension of the Habeas Corpus, or Personal Safety Act, together with the rest of that train of measures, which have led to our actual situation. But, amongst other enemies, against whom the Reformers had to contend, were those very formidable ones called "Church and King" mobs, who made their appearance and gave proof of their energy in many parts of the kingdom, but nowhere in a manner much more conspicuous than at Manchester, as we shall presently see in the history of their attack on the house of Mr. Walker and some of his brother Reformers.

This town, like all other considerable places, was inundated with publications against "Jacobins and Traitors," and the people were, in many places, stirred up to acts of violence by such means. They were told, that these Jacobins meant to destroy the church and all religion, and every body's wife and children. They were told, that the French had got several hundreds of kings instead of one, and that these Jacobins meant to make themselves kings of England, and to take all the people's goods from them of every sort; and, that the only way of preventing this was, to assist the government in putting down the said Jacobins.

On the 11th of December, 1792 (a memorable day for Manchester) the Boroughreeve called a meeting of the friends of "Social Order and our holy Religion." On the 10th, the day before this meeting took place, the Address, a passage of which I have taken for my motto, was published. — It is worthy of remark, that there was the same sort of contest going on in 1792 as there has been now in 1812. The Boroughreeve called the meeting for a government object, and his advertisement was

answered by publications on the other side. But, striking, indeed, is the contrast when we come to the *result!* The meeting in 1792 was called for the professed purpose of "preparing a *Dutiful and Loyal Address to His Majesty* on his late proclamation." There had been three proclamations, one against what were called "seditious writings," one for embodying a part of the Militia, and a third offering a bounty to seamen.— War was not yet declared; but, it was quite impossible for any man in his senses not to perceive that it was resolved upon. The Reformers, therefore, in their appeal to the people of Manchester, endeavoured to convince them, that by such addresses as they were called upon to join in, the government meant to feel the pulse of the people; and, said the writer, "if it can procure such addresses as the one contemplated, it may safely conclude, that no absurdity can be too gross for the people to swallow, and no burdens too heavy for them to bear." He, therefore, called upon the inhabitants of Manchester to pause awhile, and to consider what class of them could be benefited by WAR. He then put to them the following pithy questions: "Will funded property become more valuable? Will landed property increase by it? Will it diminish the excise, or the land tax, or the house tax, or the window tax, or the commutation tax, or any of the long, long catalogue of taxes, which lie so heavy upon this devoted country? Will the home trade be increased by war? By war, which will add to these numerous taxes—which will enhance the necessities of life—and which will lessen the consumption of manufactures of every kind? Will the exporter benefit by war, which will increase the risk of exportation—the price of insurance—and the prime cost of almost every material? By war, which will delay the execution of foreign orders, by depriving our merchants of their seamen—and put in jeopardy the most material part of our trade?"

If the Inhabitants of Manchester were unable to answer these questions in 1792, they are quite competent to the task in 1812. Experience is a great teacher! However, the Meeting took place, and the "Dutiful and Loyal Address" was carried amidst the acclamations of the people. The Inhabitants of Manchester had not then had the benefit of the lessons of this great teacher. They thought, as they were

told to think, that the time was arrived for “clipping the wings of France” for ever, and they supposed, doubtless, that that would be a fine thing for them. Time, however, has convinced them, that they were misinformed. The wings of France, instead of being clipped, have been growing from that day to this, and, after having covered most effectually her own territories, have been extended over the territories of almost all our former allies.

But, when this Meeting of the Addressers was over, the “dutiful and loyal” assemblage did not set an example of the effect of those principles of “Social Order,” in the propagation of which they were engaged. They, in short, became *rioters*; they attacked Mr. Thomas Walker’s house, and also the house of Mr. Thomas Cooper, another member of the Constitutional Society, that is to say, another parliamentary Reformer. The attack was renewed and repeated several times, and the riots continued, with intervals, for some days. Now, what was, upon this occasion, the conduct of those who called themselves “the “Loyal?” Did they make any efforts to prevent the destruction of the property of Mr. Walker, or of any one else who was known to be an advocate of Reform? Mr. Walker, in his narrative, published at the time, says that he received no protection whatever; he says, that, during the day of the meeting, he was told that a riot was talked of for the night; he says, that the mob were made drunk, in the same way as at elections; that they were collected together and led through the streets with music, with a board hoisted as a standard, with “CHURCH AND KING” written upon it; that they huzza’d as they proceeded, and now and then shouted “DAMN TOM “PAINÉ;” that a friend of his was ill treated for making application for protection; and that, one person in particular, whose office he names, told the mob, that he would give them a guinea for the house of every jacobin that they would pull down. Upon this same occasion, the house of two printers and booksellers, Messrs. Falkner and Birch, was attacked by the Church and King mob, and was very seriously injured. These two gentlemen, who published a news-paper, called the “Manchester Herald,” were afterwards pursued by the government, till they had accumulated upon their heads FIVE EX-OFFICIO INFORMATIONS and SIX INDICTMENTS. They, not relishing the idea of dying in a gaol, went to America,

where, I understand, they have done very well, and whence they may now, in perfect safety, view the state of that town, in which they were persecuted.

Mr. Walker himself resided mostly in a country house which he rented, and, such was the *liberty* then enjoyed by him, that the man of whom he rented the house went to him, *before* the above-mentioned riots, and expressed his fears, that the house would be pulled down. Still, however, he persevered in his endeavours to open the eyes of his townsmen; still he and his society raised their voices for *Reform of Parliament* and for a *Continuation of Peace with France*. But, it was not long before he had much more serious dangers to encounter. After rumours of his having been guilty of *treason* had been some time afloat, to the great terror of his wife and children and all who were connected with him, there was a warrant on a charge of high treason actually issued against him, but, it was not executed. He was, at last, indicted, with others, for “a conspiracy to “overthrow the constitution and government, and to aid and assist the French “in case they should invade the kingdom.” Of this crime he and all those who were indicted with him were acquitted. The Judge, Heath, told him he was honourably acquitted. The witness, THOMAS DUNN, who was the only one, and who was also the informer, was proved to have been guilty of *wilful perjury*, and to have confessed that he had been BRIBED to do what he had done! This wretch was committed from the court; was tried at the next assizes, and was sentenced to stand in the pillory and to be imprisoned for two years.

But, who was to sustain, for any length of time, the complicated and accumulated persecutions that Mr. Walker had to encounter? The expenses of these law-proceedings, including the prosecution of the villain Dunn, he states at upwards of THREE THOUSAND POUNDS! This was so much that he had to pay for the chance of saving himself from transportation; for the chance of not being dragged from his family, and sent to pass the rest of his life amongst thieves, robbers, and the most infamous of mankind. I have not the pleasure to know Mr. Walker personally, and can speak positively of the effects of his persecution no further than I find them recorded in his book; but, I have heard, that he was finally compelled to quit Manchester and its neighbourhood; and, in all

probability, he escaped with the wreck of his fortune.

Such, Gentlemen, was the treatment which your opponents received at Manchester, when, at the outset, they endeavoured to persuade the people not to give their countenance to a war, the effects of which they foresaw and foretold, and which effects the then deluded people are now tasting. And, what was said of rioting *then*? In what way were the rioters then spoken of by the friends of "Social Order?" This is a question worth answering. It is of great importance to know what men *in authority* then said upon the subject of rioting. In what way they *then* spoke of rioters. Mr. Walker's book (and this shows the utility of putting things upon record) refers me to the Debates in Parliament; where I find, that, upon a motion of MR. GREY (now Lord Grey) for a prosecution, by the Attorney General, of the author of a "*loyal*" publication tending to excite riots against the Dissenters; here, in this Debate, I find Mr. Windham (then one of the Ministers) answering Mr. Fox in the following words: "The House had directed no prosecutions *on either side*, and, therefore, could not be charged with partiality. The law was *equally open in all cases*. The indignation excited against Mr. Walker, was much more fairly imputed to his *political opinions*, than to his being a dissenter. It was natural and even *justifiable* for men, to feel indignation against those who promulgated doctrines, threatening *all that was valuable and dear in society*; and if there were not means of redress by law, *even violence was justifiable*. But we had laws, therefore violence ought to be punished; and on this ground he defended the associations, as tending to prevent violence as giving vigour to the law."

This was the way, in which riots and rioters were *then* spoken of. Mr. GREY's motion was rejected, though, on the other side, the Attorney General was active enough in the prosecution of Paine and others. During this Debate MR. PEEL, who has been since made a Baronet, and whose son has a *good fat place under the Minister*; Mr. Peel made the following most curious observations and statement. He said, that "The COMMON PEOPLE ARE BETTER JUDGES OF THINGS THAN THEY ARE SUPPOSED TO BE." French writings and Paine's writings, "and all the writings and doctrines of

"Paine's friends, have had *no effect on them*. He had many workmen; Paine's book was put into their hands, and to his knowledge they reasoned thus upon it: "Equality is impossible—are we to change our condition for that of Frenchmen?—Two shillings a day for eight-pence?—Warm clothes for broken breeches?—and plenty of wholesome beef for FROGS?—No; we will have no such fellowship with them."—He said he felt the most sincere satisfaction in having it in his power to declare, that such a useful body of men, from whose labours and industry the country received such abundant benefits, had but one sentiment, and that was *loyalty*, attachment for their lawful governors, and veneration for the Constitution. As to party amongst them, there was once a division—one side called *Pittites*, and the other *Foxites*; but that has ceased; they have all coalesced, and call themselves KINGITES!"

Now, Gentlemen Addressers, I do not know whether the Baronet is at present one of your body, as he was in 1792, when he actually attended at the Meeting, which was followed by the riot against Mr. Walker and others; but, if he be still one amongst you, it is worth while for him to look back a little to what passed at that time. He *then* said, that the common people were pretty good judges of things; better than they were supposed to be; and, therefore, he is, I should hope, disposed to censure those at Manchester, who have now actually produced public disturbances by wishing to shut the common people out of a Meeting, publicly called, and with the professed object of deliberating upon questions of great national importance. Surely, the common people are as well qualified to judge *now* as they were in 1792. They had then speculation to proceed upon. They now have experience, and dear-bought experience too.

Having now, Gentlemen, reminded you of the past; having reminded you of the conduct of the rioters who took "*Church and King*" for their motto; having reminded you of your own conduct at that time, let me beg of you now to hear me with patience, while I give you my advice as to your future conduct, in which advice will be comprised my opinion as to the remedy for those evils, which your town and neighbourhood experience.

And, first, permit me to express a hope, that you will never attempt to raise a

"Church and King" mob; that you will never use means for inflaming the minds of the people, and for exciting hatred in them against any sect, either of religionists or of politicians, on account of their opinions. You now have seen, and some of you have felt, what it is to be exposed to popular violence; you have seen and felt what it is to be in a state, where, for the moment at least, the law has been of no use to you; and, do you not think, that Messrs. Cooper and Walker, and Falkner and Birch had feelings as well as you have? Do you think that any just man will feel more compassion for Messrs. Burton and Goodair than for Mr. Walker? Mrs. Goodair and children were, it seems, compelled to flee for their lives; and were not Mrs. Walker and her children? It is certainly upon unjustifiable grounds that the assailants of Messrs. Burton have proceeded; but, were the grounds justifiable upon which the assailants of Mr. Walker proceeded? The violences committed against Mr. Walker do by no means justify those now committing. It is not in that way that I have stated them. I have brought them forward as a warning to you, whom I look upon as the same sort of persons, if not the very same persons, who were addressers in 1792; and, I wish to remind you of your language at that time respecting riots, compared to what your language is now; I wish to avail myself of this occasion to impress upon your minds the danger of countenancing popular violence against an adversary; I wish you to bear in mind how terrible an agent it is to employ; and, while you are feeling yourselves, I wish to make you feel for those of your townsmen, who, in 1792, were insulted, assaulted, persecuted, and driven into exile.

But, you will say, perhaps, that *they* were bad men; that they wished to overturn the constitution, the "Church and King." It was not for you and the mob to judge them. Mr. Walker was tried and acquitted, and his accuser was proved to have acknowledged that he had been *bribed* to bear false witness against him. Mr. Cooper, the next in point of suffering to Mr. Walker, has since risen to great eminence in America, filling places of considerable public trust. And, as to their wishing to overturn the constitution, all their writings, all the resolutions, addresses, petitions, and declarations of their society, show that they wished to preserve the constitution of England by procuring that reform in the House of

Commons, which Mr. Pitt and the Duke of Richmond, and which the great Lord Chatham before them, had declared to be absolutely necessary to the salvation of England. This was what Mr. Walker and his associates sought for; you might charge them with having other designs, but you never proved such charge to be true, nor can you now prove it to be true. Be their politics what they might, it was not for you to take upon you to judge them. You had a right to show that they were in the wrong; but, you had no right to hold them forth as persons having designs which you could not prove them to have.

What was the advice which Mr. Walker and his associates gave you? Look at my motto. There you will see how earnest they were with you to set your faces *against war*, against that war, which has led to the state of things in which we now are. Supposing them to have been wrong; supposing their opinions to have been wholly erroneous; what then? Why, it was your duty, if you perceived their error, to reject their advice; to combat their opinions; to defeat the object of their writings; but, you had no right to resort to any other means than those offered by the use of reason, verbally or through the press. And, indeed, there was the less excuse for violence of any sort, as it was declared by Mr. Peel, that the people were not so easily deceived as some imagined; that they were pretty good judges upon political questions; that the writings of Paine had no effect upon them; that they knew that equality was impossible; that they liked warm clothes better than broken breeches; that they did not wish to change their condition for that of Frenchmen; that they preferred plenty of wholesome beef to frogs; that they were unanimous in their love and admiration of the government. Now, this being the case, there could be no necessity nor any excuse for language calculated to rouse the people to hatred and to acts of violence against those who approved of the writings of Paine. Supposing, therefore, the Reformers to have been in the wrong, there could be no possible justification for pursuing them with rancour and violence.

But, Gentlemen, "ye Loyal Addressers," *were the Reformers wrong?* Have you not now the woful experience of their having been right? Have you not now before your eyes the fulfilment of their predictions to the very letter? If Mr.

Thomas Cooper were here at this time, could he draw the picture of your present situation more correctly than he drew it in prophecy twenty years ago? But, I much question if even he ever supposed, that the war, which he so zealously and ably laboured to prevent, would produce a hundredth part of the miseries which it has produced. If the advice of Messrs. Cooper and Walker had been followed, there would have been no war of England against France; the former would have held the office of Mediatress between France and her enemies; and, though there might have been great troubles and convulsions in France, there is no good reason to suppose that they would have operated to the injury of England, or to the danger of any part of the constitution. Being Mediatress, England would have been able to keep the ambition of France within bounds of moderation; because the colonies of France (by far the richest in the world) would have been at our mercy. But, when once we were got into war, and had taken or destroyed all that our power could reach, France cared no more for our hostility; not being able to take vengeance upon us, she inflicted it upon our allies; and, for the loss of her colonies, her commerce and her fleet, she sought compensation in the subjugation of the Continent. This we saw with a dry eye, as long as we were permitted to trade with those who had been subjugated; but now, when that trade is put an end to, we begin to feel all the consequences of the fatal politics, which, in the year 1792, were adopted by Pitt and his colleagues and sanctioned by you, the Addressers of Manchester, in opposition to the pressing solicitations, the earnest prayers, of those whom you called Jacobins and Levellers; whom you marked out as objects for popular hatred, and who soon became the objects of popular violence; yes, of the violence of that very populace, who have now committed acts of violence against yourselves.

What a lesson is here! How forcibly do these facts reason against all attempts to delude the people! Against all attempts to expose our fellow-citizens to popular hatred by unfounded imputations; against all attempts to stifle opinions by personal reproach! You succeeded for the time. Your persecuted fellow-citizens were, for the greater part, destroyed or ruined. The cry of "Church and King, and Damn Tom Paine and the Jacobins" triumphed. The jails were crowded with those against

whom the cry was raised. But, the war, against which they set their faces, has not the less produced the consequences which they apprehended from it. Parliamentary Reform has been prevented; an odium has been thrown upon the name of republican and that of reformer; but, still, the consequences of the war are the same. The republic of France is no more; France is governed by an Emperor; but, this circumstance has not prevented the danger to England; and, I believe it will not be denied, that *some* of those who were, in 1792, so much alarmed at the idea of seeing France a republic, would now rejoice exceedingly to see her primary assemblies and her convention restored. I say *some* of them; because I am aware, that there are others, who, rather than see such an example existing on the other side of the channel, would see England herself under the dominion of an *Emperor* of France.

The real cause of the war with France was, I am convinced, the *dread of a Parliamentary Reform in England*. I wish you, Gentlemen, to pay particular attention to this; to hear me with patience, and to judge with candour whether my opinion be, or be not, founded in reason.

You remember well, that all the Societies, which sprang up in 1792, had for their avowed object that Reform in the Commons' House of Parliament, on the necessity of which to the liberties of the country so many men of great talents, and some of great public virtue, had insisted. Amongst these Societies was that of "the Friends of the People," to whom belonged many Lords and Commoners of great fortunes and of excellent character, and whose memorable petition was presented to the House by Mr. Grey, in May, 1793. The Reformers derived great countenance from the changes, in favour of public liberty, which were taking place in France, during 1789 and the three following years. The cause was then a cause of fifty years' standing; it had always been gaining ground; and the proceedings in France made it very apparent, that, unless a reform took place in England, the latter country must no longer talk of its superior liberty. It was now seen, therefore, by the enemies of Reform, that they must give way at home, or that the free system of government adopted in France must be overthrown. We must observe too, in justice to those who still opposed Reform in 1792, that the French had then abolished all feudal rights, all Privileged Orders, and had ap-

propriated all Church property to the public use; and, it might, perhaps, have been feared, that some of the Reformers in England wished to go the same lengths.

This is, however, going full as far as any fair reasoner can demand; and, it does, in my opinion, by no means amount to a justification of the refusal to enter upon a Reform of the Parliament; because, either the nation in general went the same lengths as the most Democratical of the Reformers, or they did not; if the latter, these Reformers could never have carried their point; and, if the former, the general wish of the nation ought to have been, at least, listened to, which the prayer for Reform never was. A different mode of reasoning was, however, adopted by the enemies of Reform. They thought, that if they once gave an extension of the elective franchise, a Democracy would pour in upon them as it had upon the Nobles and Clergy of France; and, that, therefore, they must resolve to resist every attempt at change; and that, in order to have the means of resistance in their hands, and, at the same time, to assist in destroying the fearful example in France, it was necessary to join in the coalition against the new order of things in that country. Those who reasoned thus (and many good men did so reason), do not appear to have calculated upon any of the consequences that a war against France might bring in its train, other than those of mere expense; and, every one can remember, that the common saying was, that it was “better for a man to give the half of his property in taxes, than to have the whole taken from him by a revolution.” But, we have now learned, that there were other dangers besides those to be apprehended from the examples of *anarchy*; we have lived to see, that an extremely “regular ‘government’” in France is, to say the least of it, as formidable as all the reformers, republicans, jacobins, and levellers put together.

The wise way would have been to reform the Parliament in 1792, agreeably to the plan of Mr. Pitt and the Duke of Richmond. That would have satisfied all men of any weight in the nation, whether from their property or their talents. That measure would have left reasonable men nothing to complain about; and peace might have been preserved with France, whose leaders would have found it their interest to cultivate harmony with England. I believe, that all the old governments of the Continent would have been destroyed.

They never could have existed while there was a free government in France. But, have we saved those governments? Are they not all overthrown except that of Russia, which it would be difficult to get any one to ensure for any length of time? By taking part in the war, we have not saved any one of the old governments of Europe, while we have, by so taking part, deprived ourselves of the means of preventing those immense additions to the territory of France that now make her so formidable. If we had not taken part in the war; if we had remained neutral; we should, at all times, have had the means of checking the ambitious strides of the French, because the loss of what we should have had it in our power to take from them would have been so great and so severely felt, that whoever had been at the head of their affairs would have been afraid to provoke a war with us. By joining in the coalition against the French, by seizing their colonies, by destroying their commerce and ruining their colonists, merchants, and traders, by demolishing their fleet, and especially by our declarations against the principles of the revolution; by these acts we rendered them quite desperate with regard to us; we left them no reason to fear any thing further at our hands, and, therefore, we had no means left of interposing for the prevention of those additions to the territory of France of which we now so heavily complain, and which gives her the power of directly shutting the Continent, and indirectly shutting America against us. When we complain of the *ambition* of France, as displayed in her appropriating to herself so many countries heretofore independent, we do not seem to consider what she has *lost* during the war. We offer to give her back her colonies indeed; but, we have not *St. Domingo* (worth all the rest of the West Indies) to give her back; and, are we ready to give her back her *fleet*? These are losses which she owes to us; and she has sought, upon the Continent, to obtain a compensation; and the obtaining of that compensation has put into her hands the power of doing what she now does with regard to our trade and commerce.

But, you will say, it is now too late to talk of what might have been done in 1792. It is too late to prevent what has already taken place, I grant; but, it is not too late, but is precisely the time, to look back at our past errors, and, by clearly perceiving how we have erred, to guard ourselves against future errors. You, especially, who

were so eager for war in 1792 and 1793, and who so vehemently abused all those who opposed you; you who saw the houses of some of your townsmen demolished because they were against that war, which has, in the end, proved so calamitous, ought, surely, now to do all that lies in your power to show that your error was not wilful. The immediate cause of the riots in your town and neighbourhood was the advertisement for a Meeting to address the Regent. The inhabitants were all called together by that publication; but, it was found that they were *really coming*; and that they were coming in opposition to the intended Address; when this was discovered, then you would have *no meeting*, and your Address was to lie for signatures at the Police Office! Was this *fair*? Was this *decent*? Was this *just*? How could you expect any thing short of what took place? And, though a riot is never to be countenanced, and ought always to be decidedly censured, whether the cry be for "Church and King," or against Farmers, Frame-workers, or Tom Paine; still, there is great blame to be imputed to those who may have been the cause of a riot, as you certainly were of that which is said to have taken place at the exchange at Manchester. If the meeting had not been *called*, it is clear that the people would not have assembled upon that occasion; and, if you had *held* the meeting, and fairly taken the sense of the people upon your intended Address, there would have been no food for discontent, because, as your Address would have been negatived, and one of a contrary cast carried in its stead, the people, satisfied with their victory, would have gone quietly to their homes; and thus, perhaps, would have been prevented all that mischief and bloodshed, all those melancholy scenes, which your town and neighbourhood have since exhibited, and the ultimate consequences of which no man can tell; for, one act of violence leads to another act of violence; the infliction of punishment out of the ordinary course of things engenders revenge; and, if open revenge be checked by force, it assumes the horrible character of *assassination*, as appears already to have been the case in the neighbourhood of Leeds.

Let me, therefore, advise you, if you call meetings another time, to suffer them to take place; to receive the sense of the people with impartiality; to record that sense in the usual way; and to yield cheerfully to the voice of the majority thus impartially

collected. In a Letter from Manchester, published in the London Courier of the 10th of April, it is said, that "Instead of leaving the discussion of the question to "the well-informed part of the inhabitants, as had always been the custom before, no pains were spared to work upon "the passions, and to mislead the judgment of the lower orders." Now, whether the discussion was confined to the well-informed part of the inhabitants, when, on the 11th of Dec. 1792, Mr. Walker's house was attacked at the watch-words of "Church and King" and "Damn Tom Paine;" whether upon that occasion, or any of the other numerous occasions to which I might refer in the early years of the war, pains were spared "to work upon "the passions and to mislead the judgment of the lower orders;" or, whether the lower orders of this same town of Manchester be less sound of judgment as to politics now, than Mr. Peel described them to be in the year 1792, when they called out for "Church and King," and when they "Damned Tom Paine" and burned him in effigy; whether the affirmative or the negative of these propositions be true, I will leave you to determine; but, this I know, that, if you meant to collect the sense of a chosen few of the inhabitants, you were wrong to call a meeting of the inhabitants in general. Having called a meeting of the inhabitants in general, it was fitting and just fairly to take the sense of the inhabitants in general; for, be it observed, if your Address had been carried, it would have passed for, and you yourselves would have called it, the Address of the Inhabitants in general. Your proceeding was, therefore, unfair, and was well calculated to produce the effects which it did produce.

However, you have the power to abstain from the like in future, and let me advise you to do it, if you be really desirous to restore peace to your distracted county. There are, I perceive, endeavours making to inculcate the notion, that the riots have been stirred up by *designing men*; and, in short, that there is *sedition*, or *rebellion*, at the bottom of what appears to be nothing more than the mere ordinary effects of want of work, joined to the high price of provisions. It has been stated, and particularly in the London news-paper, the Courier, of the 28th of April, that the riots have originated with persons not suffering from the distresses of the times, but actuated by *other motives* than those of relieving the

distressed; and that great pains have been taken to irritate the minds of the labouring classes by the “secret distribution of inflammatory hand-bills.” And, in another number of the same print, it is asserted, that papers inculcating disaffection are distributed about in *manuscript*. That these are falsehoods, no one can, I think, doubt; for, none of the writings or hand-bills are produced; not one of them is given us to read; and no proof of their existence is given. These, therefore, we must set down as falsehoods; and, if falsehoods, that they are most malignant falsehoods every one must see. The object of them cannot be to excite indignation against the rioters, for that is already done; but, it must be to awaken anew suspicions against those whose political opinions differ from the opinions of the inventors of these falsehoods; to awaken anew all the animosities of the years 1792, 3 and 4; to rekindle the persecutions of those times; and, rather than see the principles of their opponents triumph, to plunge their country into all the horrors of a civil war. To see the country disturbed as it now is by the discontents arising from want is, one would think, quite distressing enough; news sufficiently agreeable to tell Napoleon; but, these implacable, these pernicious men, cannot restrain their virulence; they must tell the world, that the people are instigated in their riotous conduct by persons who have seditious, if not treasonable, designs. What can be more infamous, and, at the same time, more foolish, than attempts of this sort? The men who make these attempts are the real enemies of the country, and as such they ought to be punished.

I have observed, in the accounts of the riots, that the rioters are frequently called “REFORMERS,” the object of which must be to excite, in the minds of ignorant people, a belief, that all those who wish for a Parliamentary Reform, approve of riots; that they are, in fact, nothing more than rioters not yet broken loose. Now, gentlemen, let me ask you, whether you think, that this is the way to restore harmony to your town and neighbourhood? Whether you think, that this foul, this base attempt to affix a stigma upon the Reformers is likely to produce that union of feeling and of effort which is so necessary at this moment? To what an extent these wretched men must carry their malice! It seems, and, indeed, it is evident, that they would prefer seeing the country utterly ruined, to the seeing of that reform which

every great man that has lived in the country for the last fifty years has declared to be absolutely necessary to the well-being of the country. The cause of reform has never been attempted to be supported by violence; it has uniformly relied upon the force of reason and law; it is, therefore, infamous in the last degree to endeavour to confound its advocates with those, who, from the unhappy circumstances of the times, are led to set both at defiance. But, besides the wickedness of these attempts, as relating to the parties slandered, how manifestly do they tend to encourage the enemy! It is, doubtless, great encouragement to him to learn, that there are such serious disturbances in the heart of our country; but, what must he think, if these writers should succeed in convincing him, that, at bottom, these disturbances arise from *political causes*? And, which is still worse, if they should succeed in really engendering a political cause? For, be it known to them, that it is quite possible to make men that which they are falsely accused of being. Therefore, of all the things to be avoided, false accusations are the first.

There is one thing more, against which I will take the liberty to caution you; and that is against the use of that abusive and contemptuous language towards the rioters, which has been employed by the Times and some other news-papers. Such language cannot possibly do any good; and it may do a great deal of harm. Its inevitable effect is to inflame and embitter. To speak of them as the Times has done, as an organized rabble, easily beaten by the soldiers; and to say, that it may be desirable that the spirit should break out in all the places at once, so that the trouble of subduing it may be the sooner over; to talk in this light and swaggering manner is calculated to swell discontent into rage and despair. It discovers such a cold-bloodedness, such a complete want of feeling, that it cannot fail to embitter those whom we all ought to desire to see conciliated, if conciliation be possible. Disapprobation, censure, blame may be expressed, but let them always be mixed with expressions of sorrow, and with compassion for the people's sufferings. I cannot help highly commending a notification of Messrs. BURTON not to employ the offensive machines again. For, suppose them to have succeeded by dint of military force in defending their factory; they could not have kept soldiers always with

them; and, if they could, what a life would it have been to lead? Besides, the danger never ends, as Mr. Cartwright and the constable in the neighbourhood of Leeds now find; for against them has been attempted the horrible crime of assassination. Persuaded as I am, that, while all possible protection should be given to those who are attacked, nothing in the way of conciliation should be neglected. In this view of the matter I cannot sufficiently applaud the conduct of the magistrates of Birmingham, who do not hold the language of the *Times* news-paper; but who propose to use all the means in their power, by subscriptions and otherwise, to relieve the distresses of the people. This, whatever the *Times* may think of it, is much more likely to prove a protection to property than would be a challenge to the people to fight them with soldiers. This merciless writer seems to have no feelings that lead him to perceive that the rioters are our countrymen; and that if destruction be the remedy, it is destruction that has no fixed limits. But, as I trust, that there are not many men in the kingdom who think with him, I deem it unnecessary to say any thing more in opposition to his opinions.

I have now, Gentlemen, performed the task that I proposed to myself, which was, to remind you of the ill-treatment which the Reformers experienced in your town for their opposition to that war which has brought such calamities in its train; to show you how dangerous it is, let the occasion be what it will, to give countenance to the use of unlawful force; to show you, that resorting to popular delusion naturally, in the end, brings its own punishment; to show you, that the Reformers of 1792, though so much abused and persecuted, foretold what has, at last, happened, and endeavoured to guard you against it; and herein to show you, that you ought to be slow to condemn them in future, and, more especially, that you ought to refrain from all attempts to create a belief that they are at the bottom of your present troubles. Finally, I have endeavoured to convince you, that, in all cases where it is possible to succeed by them, gentle means are to be preferred to means of the opposite description. I shall close my address with the hope that I have not written it in vain; but, I cannot help, at parting, once more to exhort you not to rail against "Jacobins and Levellers," that is to say the Reformers, as if they had any hand in

your troubles. They have had no power; they have had nothing to do in making war or in making peace; they have been able to effect not one of their objects; they have petitioned often enough, but they have never obtained any thing that they prayed for; therefore, it is impossible that they can have been the cause of any of those evils of which the people complain.

I am your friend,
WM. COBBETT.

*State Prison, Newgate,
Friday, 1st May, 1812.*

P. S. The American Discovery and some other topics, especially the City Address, must be postponed.

IRISH CATHOLICS.

*Petition presented to them on the 14th April,
1812.*

(Continued from page 544.)

We have been taught, that, according to the pure and practical principles of the British Constitution, property is justly entitled to a proportionate share of power; and we humbly trust, that no reasonable apprehension can arise from that power, which can only be obtained and exercised through the Constitution.

—We are sensible, and we do not regret, that this equality of Civil Rights (which alone we humbly sue for) will leave a fair practical ascendancy, wheresoever property shall predominate: but, whilst we recognize and acknowledge the wholesomeness of this great principle, we cannot admit the necessity of the unqualified disfranchisement of any part of the people, in a Constitution like that of these realms.

—We are gratified by the reflection, that the attainment of this our Constitutional object will prove as conducive to the welfare and security of this great empire, as to the complete relief of the Roman Catholic community,—that it will secure the quiet and concord of our country; animate all classes of the people in the common defence, and form the most stable protection against the dangers which heavily menace these Islands.—For we most humbly presume to submit it to your Royal Highness, as our firm opinion, that an equal degree of enthusiasm cannot reasonably be expected from men, who feel themselves excluded from a fair participation of the blessings of a good Constitution and Government, as from those who fully

partake of its advantages ; that the enemies of this empire, who meditate its subjugation, found their best hope of success upon the effects of those Penal Laws, which, by depressing millions of the inhabitants of Ireland, may weaken their attachment to their country, and impair the means of its defence ; and that the continued pressure of these laws, in times of unexampled danger, only spreads the general feeling of distrustful alarm, and augments the risks of common ruin.—To avert such evils, to preserve and promote the welfare and security of this empire, and to become thoroughly identified with our fellow-subjects in interests and affection, are objects as precious in our eyes, upon every consideration of property, principle, and moral duty, as in those of any other description of the inhabitants of these Realms.—If, in thus humbly submitting our depressed condition and our earnest hopes to the consideration of your Royal Highness, we would dwell upon the great numbers and the property of the Roman Catholics of Ireland, already so considerable and so rapidly increasing, and to their consequent most important contributions to the exigencies of the State—we would do so, not with a view of exciting unworthy motives for concession, but in the honest hope of suggesting legitimate and rational grounds of Constitutional relief.—And deeply, indeed, should we lament, if these very recommendations should only serve to hold us out as the objects of harsh suspicion at home, or of daring attempts upon our allegiance from abroad.—May we, then, with hearts deeply interested in the fate of this our humble supplication, presume to appeal to the wisdom and benignity of your Royal Highness on behalf of a very numerous, industrious, affectionate, and faithful body of people—the Roman Catholics of Ireland :—And to pray, that your Royal Highness may be pleased to take into your valuable consideration the whole of our condition—our numbers, our services, our merits, and our sufferings.—And, as we are conscious of the purity of our motives and the integrity of our principles, we, therefore, humbly pray to be restored to the rights and privileges of the Constitution of our Country ; to be freed from all penal and disabling Laws in force against us on account of our Religious faith ; and that we may thereby become more worthy, as well as more capable, of promoting the service of the Crown, and the substantial interests of this great Empire, now committed to

the unrestricted wisdom of your Royal Highness.

Speech of the EARL OF DONOUGHMORE, on the Catholic Claims, in the House of Lords, on the 21st April, 1812.—Copied from the Morning Chronicle of the 22d April, 1812.

THE EARL OF DONOUGHMORE began by observing, that the Petitions which had been presented on the part of the Catholic Body sufficiently represented the grievances under which they had so patiently laboured, and the redress which they now so constitutionally sought for ; they came before their Lordships with a firm but respectful appeal to their justice, and required of it in the name of the public good, that the Catholics be allowed to contribute their strength to that of the empire, by the removal of their present disabilities, and the revival of their suspended rights. Before, however, he proceeded immediately to the merits of this question, it might be thought necessary to guard against a preliminary objection, that of bringing before their Lordships what they had already decided upon in the course of the present Sessions. It was true, that within that period two questions had been agitated by their Lordships, which in a great measure referred to that of the claims of the Irish Catholics. Indeed, so important above all other subjects, was that of the alarming state of Ireland at such a crisis as the present, that he should find it difficult to select a great question of vital importance to the empire which did not embrace or involve in it that of the expediency of conciliating Ireland ; but he admitted, that two discussions had been already before their Lordships, which indirectly referred to the present, but it would not be pretended that the decision upon either of those ought to supersede the discussion which he was now about to bring before their Lordships. The first of those two questions involved the consideration of the manner in which the judicial functions in Ireland had been at that time discharged. The second had for its avowed object the removal of a distrusted, disunited, and inefficient Administration. Upon neither of those occasions, therefore, had any Noble Lord an opportunity of appropriating his vote to the simple question of the Catholic Claims, and though such Noble Lord was an enemy to the principle of exclusion, he might not possibly have felt

himself prepared to pass censure upon either party, without having his mind more completely made up upon the subject. Some of their Lordships might, perhaps, be disposed to wait until the then veering and fluctuating state of the Government assumed some fixed and steady form; so many persons were said to be wavering, whether they could conscientiously remain longer in power; and so many were doubting, whether under such circumstances they could with any conscience accept of power at all. Whatever might have been the motives that led to those two decisions, he conceived that at all events no Noble Lord was pledged by his vote upon either of those occasions against the question now before their Lordships. But if ever there were a question respecting which change of opinion had been sanctioned by precedent the most weighty and extensive, it was that upon the justice of the Catholic Claims. In the year 1792, the Catholic question might be said to have been scouted by the Irish Parliament—the minority in their favour not exceeding forty-five, and yet the following year [1793] would be memorable for the first great step made by the Irish Legislature towards the emancipation of the Irish Catholics; and this too, after a series of the most intolerant conduct, the rejection of Catholic Claims was held out as a signal to all the petty Corporations to pour in their addresses, and flatter the prejudices of the hour with effusions of a bigotry best fitted to compliment such prejudices. In the recess of that year, the Catholics held meetings which were not then thought dangerous—a correspondence was opened and carried on between them and the Government; and to such a height did the opposition to their just claims proceed, that the then Secretary for Ireland declined to forward their Petitions to the Throne. Subsequently, however, a Noble Viscount wisely sacrificed the prejudices of the Irish Government to the feelings of the Irish people, and became instrumental in obtaining for the petitioning Catholics access to the Royal ear.—What was the consequence? That which must always be the consequence, when a free people make known their wrongs to a wise and gracious Monarch—redress was the consequence—redress, not in the fullest sense, but to a much larger degree than had been expected at that time by the most sanguine of their friends—and all this too within the small compass of a year, and in defiance of the

bigotry that took alarm at this dawn of truth and reason. Nor was it to be forgotten, that then, as now, the Corporation of the City of Dublin took the lead in raising the cry against the rights of their countrymen; but with this remarkable difference, that then they had no inconsiderable portion of followers, but that now all the influence of a Government exerting every nerve and sinew to effect their purpose, could not succeed in procuring one other corporation throughout Ireland to share with the Dublin Corporation the disgrace of such a shameless consistency. (*hear! hear!*) So much for the infuriate bigotry that had been so long the scourge of Ireland, and stain of England, and the weakness of both!—A bigotry that seemed to be consuming away by its own virulence, to be dying under the intense fury of its own essential poisons! Never the child of the understanding, but in all ages the offspring of the worst passions the worst of hearts could engender (*hear! hear!*) degrading man into a reasoning brute, where contradictory vices are made, as it were, to clash together, and render him all that is contemptible and formidable—all that is cowardly and ferocious (*hear! hear!*). Their Lordships could not but rejoice to perceive how rapidly this odious spirit was hastening to its total extinction. Strong as it was in 1793, it did not influence, it could not over-awe the Irish Parliament—the Act itself was an argument for the principle—the manner in which it had been brought before the Irish Parliament was another—it came before them with all the weight and authority of government; why did not the present question come in the same manner before their Lordships? He most sincerely regretted that it did not; but he could not as readily explain why it did not. He was aware that formerly His Majesty's Ministers had given way upon this subject, from a respectful deference to the known scruples of a certain illustrious individual. At that period certainly no such message was to be expected; but surely there was no ground for suspecting the existence of any such obstruction now! (*hear! hear!*) To whatever might be supposed to be the actual opinions of the Prince Regent at the present moment upon this question, he knew it would not be Parliamentary to allude. But if one might be allowed to argue from what were generally received as the known opinions of the Prince of Wales—

LORD KENYON called the Noble Lord to

order.—He thought it highly disorderly to allude to the opinions of any person exercising the royal functions of the realm (*hear!*), or to conjecture what they were, as it was quite unparliamentary to attempt to influence the deliberations of that House, by stating the opinions of the Prince Regent.

THE EARL OF DONOUGHMORE.—“If the ‘‘ Noble Lord’s patience in hearing me ‘‘ had not been overcome by his excessive ‘‘ zeal to preserve order, he might have ‘‘ learned by this time that I had no intention ‘‘ of saying what he has supposed me ‘‘ to have said. Had the Noble Lord ‘‘ heard me out, he would have found that ‘‘ I was speaking merely to a point of history, to what history records to have ‘‘ been, at a certain period, the political ‘‘ sentiments of the then Prince of Wales ‘‘ —to that, as such, I contend I have a ‘‘ right to speak, and I must beg leave of ‘‘ the Noble Lord to add, that unseasonable interruptions are not the best means ‘‘ to preserve order.—(*Hear!*)—All similar attempts to obstruct my humble efforts in a good cause, shall prove as impotent as the present. The Catholics ‘‘ have not placed their cause in hands that ‘‘ will tamely allow it to be thwarted by ‘‘ interruptions so unseasonable, improper, ‘‘ and disorderly.”

LORD KENYON, in a low tone of voice, appealed to the House whether, in his view of the Noble Earl’s argument, he was not justified in calling him to order. If, under that impression, he had unseasonably interrupted the Noble Lord, he regretted it. He had merely acted from a sense of Parliamentary duty, without intending any thing personal to the Noble Earl—(*Hear, hear!*).

THE EARL OF DONOUGHMORE admitted that the Noble Lord was right, in interrupting him; if he had improperly introduced the name of the Prince Regent to influence the proceedings of that House; but what was the true statement of his argument? He had been reminding the House, that in all former instances of concession to the Catholics, a message had come down to Parliament from the Throne recommending such concession. In the first instance, he had been explaining, why in deference to scruples in a certain quarter, such a recommendation could not have reasonably been expected during the last ten years; and from thence he naturally proceeded to inquire why, since such obstruction was now notoriously removed, no

message had come down to that House from the Prince Regent respecting the Claims of the Catholics? Was that to be characterized as an attempt to influence the deliberations of their Lordships? (*hear, hear!*) Had he not a right to complain (if he thought it matter of complaint), that there had been no recommendation in the speech from the Throne to consider the Claims of the Catholics? (*hear, hear!*) If the question had come before them thus recommended, they would in all probability have gone into Committee. The object of his reasoning then, was to induce their Lordships to agree to discuss the question, rather than to decide upon it; but it could be discussed in Committee only; for nearly twenty years that House had not gone into Committee upon it—that was, they had for that length of time, refused to discuss it; they would now have to carry into the Committee the facts, the reasoning and progressive truth of twenty years’ experience. Who could say what prejudices they might shake off in that discussion; and, therefore, why might he not be permitted to lament the loss of that influence which once excited such hopes, and now gave such a keen anguish to disappointment? (*Hear, hear!*) The Catholics of Ireland were justified in expecting such a recommendation from the Prince Regent. If he was to be interrupted, he must know why. He would not suffer himself to be frivolously called to order. The whole history of the life of the Prince of Wales, while a subject, was a tissue of pledges to Ireland (*hear!*); proverbially confiding as were his countrymen, they had in this instance ample grounds to warrant the utmost limits of their most unqualified and generous confidence. Had they doubted such pledges and assurances made by an ardent lofty spirit, they would have betrayed a mean distrust, which their worst enemies never yet ranked amongst their vices. They rested their faith upon solemn pledges gratuitously given, under circumstances the most calculated, to make such pledges binding. How those pledges have been since redeemed, will be the province of the future historian to record; but if the history of the past sheds no great lustre on that of the present times, the fault is not in him who compares the facts of either period in order to come at the sober truth. If history be the opposite of eulogy, the historian is not the criminal; it is not the historian who creates the inconsistency that makes the praises of one

part of a man's life, the shame of the remainder. But to turn from such heart-dejecting subjects, he came at once to the broad ground on which he was willing to take his stand in defence of his Catholic countrymen—the claim of constitutional right on the part of the Catholic; the mischiefs of any exclusive principle with respect to the constitution.—(*Hear, hear!*)—The principle of exclusion was, he contended, in itself faulty, vicious, dangerous, and must be ultimately fatal; it was, as it had been well denominated by a Noble Marquis (Wellesley), who had on a former night looked at this question with the mind of an enlightened Statesman—(*hear!*)—it was in itself an evil—a positive evil—an imperfection in the frame of the empire. Then, (said Lord Donoughmore,) if it is an evil I throw it upon your Lordships to make out the necessity that can justify the continuance of that evil.—(*Hear, hear, hear!*)—Shew, if you can, why this exclusion should continue—(*Hear, hear!*) I will not, my Lords, condescend to refute the stale cavils of a musty bigotry, which I know your Lordships would not condescend to hear. I will not proceed to argue, that the man who is fit to command a regiment, is not therefore essentially disqualified from commanding a brigade, or that there would be any danger in allowing a good and upright magistrate to be eligible to the bench, or the electors eligible to a seat in Parliament. The Act of 1793, the manner of its introduction, furnish parliamentary evidence that the Catholics are trust-worthy. This is an argument to the principle of emancipation. Why did you make them competent to elect, if you, at the same time, meant eternal exclusion from eligibility. Lord Clare, the ablest Irish opponent of the Catholics, argued against the Act of 1793, on the ground, that if the right of franchise were once granted to the Catholic, the right of eligibility must follow—(*Hear, hear!*) But you have given them the right of elective franchise; the grant of the elective franchise was in itself an acknowledgment of the constitutional right—but say some Noble Lords, “we can't admit them into ‘the State.’” My Lords, they have been already admitted—(*hear, hear!*)—you have made them constituents, and you can never regret that you have done so.—You so far abolished one line of mischievous distinction, I wish you to proceed to the consummation of this good work; I wish, my Lords, to put an end to those collisions,

that only divide and weaken that strength that might be so easily brought to act together. I wish no man to be politically degraded because he respects the dictates of the conscience, without which none can be good citizens.—I would have no distinctions, but that of the loyal and the disloyal—(*hear, hear!*).—This is such a mere question of right, that I should never consent to accept emancipation as a boon; it is no concession to a British subject to give him the constitution which is his birth-right; but so far are the present Ministers of the Prince Regent from looking at it in this point of view, that they not only refuse, but add insult to injury. They not only refuse to contribute more than £8,000. to the college of Maynooth, established for the education of the whole priesthood of Ireland, but one of them was known to declare in the other House of Parliament, that he sincerely wished that such an institution had never been established.—(*hear, hear!*)—Such was the grace with which £8,000. was yielded to the fund for educating the whole priesthood of Ireland, while at the same time £41,000. was voted to the Protestant Charter school, and £12,000. to the Dissenters, no doubt a most deserving class of men. But the Catholic population of the country were to be denied every species of instruction or improvement. They were, forsooth, a set of mere savages! If so, had they the less need of religious instruction?—(*hear, hear!*) If they were these savages, who made them such?—(*hear, hear!*)—If they are nothing but savages, let this country that prefers the change, take her due share in the infamy of it, for these savages have had the benefit of your instruction for the last 600 years; if then Ireland be barbarized, who has barbarized it? The Catholics in their firm demand of the restoration of their rights, have been compared to the sturdy beggar in Gil Blas, who points the pistol whilst he solicits the charity. This was a bad way to evade such claims. If they were beggars, it is you have made them so; and if they were to threaten, which they do not, it is not to be forgotten, that every concession to their just claims was always in the season of your adversity and distress, and that your oppression of that country was never so violent as when you own prosperity was most triumphant. The Noble Earl then proceeded to shew in a very animated manner, the strong claims the circumstances of the present times had upon the general prin-

ciples of conciliation, and the wisdom of doing seasonably and with a good grace what it might be necessary hereafter to do under very different circumstances, and in a very different manner. And here, my Lords, continued Lord D., I beg the particular attention of your Lordships, while I state a circumstance that has gone abroad, and that, in my opinion, calls for decided animadversion:—We hear every day of some dark influence skulking behind the Throne, and depriving the people of the safeguard the constitution has given them in the responsibility of Ministers, and robbing the Prince of the confidence of the people—(*hear, hear!*)—from such a quarter, advice is said to have assailed the Royal ear as to the easiest and most summary mode of getting rid of the teasing solicitations of the Catholics of Ireland—and what, my Lords, was the suggestions of this cloaked adviser; *why, to send over a battalion of the guards to that country, with a certain illustrious person at their head.* Such was the conciliatory answer proposed to be given to a people's Petition for their rights (*hear, hear!*). It was no doubt a very intelligible answer, but clear as it was meant to be, it would have been, in my opinion, productive of a rejoinder. My countrymen have been too well practised in fighting in defence of the rights of others, not to know how to fight for the little that is left themselves. Indeed, I should almost doubt whether such an infamous proposition deserved mention in this House (*hear, hear! from Ministers*), if I was not anxious, as a Peer of Parliament, to brand the author of it with all the indignant contempt such a proposition must excite in the breast of every honest man. Nor need I, my Lords, add, that the person capable of such advice would be the first to shrink from the perils to which it led. Your Lordships need not be told that such a man would be infinitely more disposed to foment dissension and hostility than, after the battle had commenced, to take his place in the front of the fight. However near such a person might be found to the Royal Person, it is the first duty of your Lordships to interpose between your Prince and such advisers, and rescue the Royal ear from the poison of such councils.* After the commencement of the unfortunate reign of Charles I., blindly welcomed by

my Catholic countrymen, as a period pregnant with the happiest prospects for their religion and for themselves,—to no event have they ever looked with so much confident and anxious hope, as to that auspicious moment, when in the fullness of time, the present heir apparent to the crown should assume the government of these his realms.—(*Hear, hear!*)

(To be continued.)

* This being an important passage, I add here the report of it from the *Times* news-paper.

" But among the means of conciliation, " he had heard of one, and that of a most " novel and extraordinary nature indeed. " He had not heard it in its original an- " nouncement: if he had, he hoped he " should have known how to give an an- " swer. It might not come from the " Throne: if it did, of course he would not " speak of it: but it came from the more " powerful source behind the Throne. " That project was, to send a battalion or " two of His Majesty's guards, with the " near relative of an illustrious Personage " at their head, to quiet the country. Of " the feasibility of this project, he would " not speak of course: but of the detest- " able and diabolical nature of such a pro- " ject, he could have no hesitation in giving " his plain and distinct opinion. Resist- " ance on the part of the Irish people would " be right, justifiable, and necessary. " They knew how to defend the privileges " of this country: he hoped they would " shew that they knew how to fight for " their own. The very idea of such a " project deserved the contempt and ha- " tred of every honourable mind. He did " not care what the relationship of the " person who might conduct this extraor- " dinary project might be to the *Illustrious* " Personage upon the throne; he (Lord " Donoughmore) would equally stigmatize " it, and not hesitate to declare, that the " person who undertook the design, would " be more ready to provoke hostility than " to put himself in the front of the battle. " He mentioned this nefarious plan but to " reprobate it, and he did not care how " near the person in question might stand " to the present possessor of the Throne."